



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 216

January Session, 2007

Substitute Senate Bill No. 717

Senate, April 2, 2007

The Committee on Transportation reported through SEN. DEFRONZO of the 6th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2007*) All state-subsidized off-peak
- 2 rail service and all state-subsidized public bus service, either
- 3 terminating or originating in this state, shall be at no charge for any
- 4 Connecticut resident sixty-five years of age or older.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2007</i>	New section
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TRA *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 08 \$	FY 09 \$
Department of Transportation	TF - Cost	8,700,000	8,700,000

Note: TF=Transportation Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 08 \$	FY 09 \$
Various Municipalities	Cost	1,000,000	1,000,000

Explanation

The table outlines the estimated cost to the state and municipalities resulting from providing free public transportation to individuals 65 years old and over.

Elderly and Disabled Public Transportation					
	Fare	Estimated	Fare	Fiscal Impact	
	<u>Discount(1)</u>	<u>Ridership</u>	<u>Collections</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Municipal</u>
Rail	50% off-peak	1.0 million	\$6.0 million	\$6.0 million	
Bus	50% / 0.65	2.0 million	\$1.3 million	\$1.0 million	\$0.3 million
ADA(2)	90% / \$2.50	<u>960,000</u>	<u>\$2.4 million</u>	<u>\$1.7 million</u>	<u>\$0.7 million</u>
Total		3.96 million	\$9.7 million	\$8.7 million	\$1.0 million

(1) Discount available for elderly and disabled.

(2) ADA services are subsidized at \$25.00 per trip.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 717*****AN ACT CONCERNING FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires that all state-subsidized, off-peak rail service and all state-subsidized public bus service either terminating or originating in Connecticut be provided at no charge to any state resident age 65 or older. Currently, these services are available to seniors at 50% off normal fares.

The Shore Line East rail service and all state-subsidized bus services, with a few exceptions, operate wholly within Connecticut. However, the New Haven Line rail service is an interstate commuter rail service operated through an agreement between the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York. It is unclear whether the state could restrict the free services to Connecticut seniors on a publicly funded interstate transportation service.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2007

BACKGROUND***State Subsidized Rail and Bus Services***

There are two commuter rail services affected by this bill: the Shore Line East service and the New Haven Line service that operates between New Haven and Grand Central Terminal in New York.

The state owns and fully subsidizes the bus services in Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford (Connecticut Transit). Connecticut Transit also has five other divisions (Bristol, Meriden, New Britain, Wallingford, and Waterbury) where bus service is subsidized through

contracts with private bus operators. The state also subsidizes the service provided by six urban transit districts (Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority, Housatonic Area Region Transit, Middletown Transit District, Milford Transit District, Southeast Area Transit District, and Valley Transit District) and four rural transit districts (Northwestern Transit District, Northeastern Transit District, Windham Transit District, and Estuary Transit District).

Finally, the state subsidizes numerous express bus routes connecting suburban towns with major urban areas. These are operated either by Connecticut Transit or through agreements with private bus operators.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 32 Nay 2 (03/14/2007)